

# THE Baptist Record

JOURNAL OF THE MISSISSIPPI BAPTIST CONVENTION SINCE 1877

## BRIEFS

### GUIDESTONE VICTORIOUS IN FIGHT WITH FED GOVT

DALLAS (BP) — GuideStone Financial Resources of the Southern Baptist Convention and the ministries it serves have gained a vital, legal victory against the Obama-era abortion/contraception mandate, marking the end of a seven-year religious liberty battle. A federal court in Ok. issued a permanent injunction March 15 that bars the federal government from enforcing a 2011 rule by the U.S. Department of Health and Human Services that required insurance coverage for contraceptives, including those that can potentially induce chemical abortions.

### ASSISTED SUICIDE LOSES IN SOME STATES, NOT HI.

WASHINGTON (BP) — Legislative efforts to legalize physician-assisted suicide have failed in two New England states, but Hawaii appears to be on the verge of enacting the practice. If Hawaii legalizes assisted suicide, it will become the seventh state to do so, following California, Colorado, Montana, Oregon, Vermont and Washington — as well as the District of Columbia. Bills in both the Massachusetts and Connecticut legislatures failed to move beyond committees. An assisted suicide bill in Hawaii has passed both houses of the legislature. Gov. David Ige, a Democrat, is on record in support of the proposal.

### SIMULTANEOUS REVIVALS SLATED FOR NEW MEXICO

ALBUQUERQUE, N.M. (Baptist New Mexican) — Twenty-three Hispanic Baptist churches plan to participate in the 2018 Simultaneous Revivals campaign organized by the Baptist Convention of New Mexico's Hispanic ministry strategist, Ricardo Rivera. Last year's participating churches reported 800 lost people attended evangelistic events, with ten percent of them registering professions of faith. Each church that commits to some kind of evangelistic project receives \$500 from the Cooperative Program through the convention to put toward the church's revival expenses.

## Page leaves SBC Executive Comm. over 'personal failing'

NASHVILLE (BP and local reports) — Frank S. Page, 65, resigned March 27 as president and chief executive officer of the Southern Baptist Convention's Executive Committee in Nashville and retired over what he originally described as a yearning to return to South Carolina to be close to family but shortly thereafter admitted to a "personal failing."

No specific details were released. His resignation was effective immediately.

Stephen Rummage, chairman of the Executive Committee (EC) and senior pastor of Bell Shoals Church in Brandon, Fl., released a 300-word statement later in the afternoon of March 27 on behalf of the EC's officers.

"Last evening, the officers of the Southern Baptist Convention (SBC) Executive Committee met via phone conference with Dr. Frank Page during which he announced his plans for retirement. Today, I spoke with Dr. Page and learned that his retirement announcement was precipitated by a morally inappropriate relationship in the recent past.

"This news will, we understand, bring great sorrow. I have shared with the Executive Committee officers what Dr. Page shared with me, including

see PAGE on p. 5

FRANK PAGE



## Sutherland Springs church schedules rebuild



SAN ANTONIO (BP) — First Church in Sutherland Springs, Texas — the Southern Baptist congregation whose members were targeted by a gunman Nov. 5, 2017, in one of the worst mass shootings in U.S. history — will begin construction of a new worship center and education building in May.

Plans were announced March 27 by Frank Pomeroy, the church's pastor. "Our primary goal is to lift up Jesus in our community. Sutherland Springs has a certain distinction because of the enormity of the tragedy that took place at our church, but every community is touched by tragedy.

"Every family and every person has hurts and sorrows. We want to be a lighthouse. The

see REBUILD on p. 6

## Commercial surrogacy cleared in Wash. State

OLYMPIA, Washington (BP) — Jay Inslee, Democrat governor of the State of Washington, put the finishing touches on a bill March 6 that legalizes commercial surrogacy, but opponents haven't given up on their argument that the measure exploits women and children by commodifying the womb.

Advocates successfully pushed the bill through the state House and Senate by narrow margins in February.

The measure updates the Uniform Parentage Act that governs how legal parent-child relationships are established or challenged in Washington State. The law previously prohibited surrogacy contracts that included compensation.

No federal laws govern surrogacy, and less than half of states have clear legislation on the issue. Even fewer have a clearly regulated surrogacy industry. Washington's new law, which goes into effect Jan. 1, 2019, establishes just that.

The law sets guidelines for the contractual arrangement of surrogacy. Surrogates must be over 21 years old and have already delivered at least one child. Medical and mental health evaluations are required for both surrogates and

see SURROGACY on p. 7

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## From the editor

WILLIAM PERKINS

### We matter, after all

**A** funny thing happened on the way to a television series premiere and a major motion picture opening weekend that really shook up Godless Hollywood. The funny part, as in notable funny and not "ha-ha" funny, has nothing to do with religion or spirituality but nonetheless can be interpreted as a sociological snapshot of America today from which religious/spiritual implications can be drawn.

The revival on March 27 of the TV sitcom series *Roseanne* on ABC television network, on which it originally aired from 1988-97, startled the entertainment establishment with its ratings. An audience of nearly 25 million viewers tuned in for the revival episode, which turned out to be 10% higher than 1997's original series farewell episode — which was itself top-rated.

By March 30, ABC had announced *Roseanne* was returning for an eleventh season after being off the air for 21 years.

The show does not at all pretend to be Christian or religious, and *The Baptist Record* is not hereby recommending that anyone watch it.

The movie, *I Can Only Imagine*, which is overtly faith-based, soared to number three on its recent opening weekend with box office much higher than its producers could imagine in their wildest dreams. According to boxofficemojo.com, *I Can Only Imagine* has drawn \$55,271,331, as of April 1, against a production budget of only seven million dollars. That's after a mere three weeks in wide release.

The analyses of these two successful entertainment products with sky-high numbers might interest people like us.

People like us live in what East and West Coast elitists refer to as "flyover country," that intellectual and cultural wasteland of the nation inland of the two coasts. We are only worthy of flying over on the way to the East and West Coasts where, of course, all the sophisticated people live in indulgent self-importance. After all, what of interest could possibly happen between New York City and Los Angeles?

This attitude seems to be especially prevalent in the entertainment industry, which feeds the country a steady mental diet of pornographic violence, political leftism, personal misconduct as normative, and the sexual perversion-of-the-month.

The part of *Roseanne* that seems to fascinate us commoners is the fact that it espouses conservative political ideas and even has a character (the lead character, *Roseanne*) who supports conservative U.S. President Donald Trump and his administration. Creative screen writers have figured out a way to appeal to Middle America through that simple plot device — and Middle America has responded in droves.

Low-brow liberal groups, who love to refer to themselves as "progressives" as if they are the only ones who are, have demanded ABC's plans for the series be scrapped for having the audacity to mention conservative ideas on national television. The people have spoken with their eyeballs, however, and scuttlebutt is that other networks are considering bringing back similar, long-cancelled series while ratings are so good in this new genre.

*I Can Only Imagine* is an uplifting story of Christian faith, forgiveness, redemption, and loyalty. The "progressives" haven't had much to say about this breakout hit, since it has mowed down any criticisms about its themes. This moving story is headed toward classic status as its appeal spreads into the hearts of both religious and non-religious moviegoers.

Now to drive home the point of the headline attached to this commentary: The incredible success of these two entertainment vehicles leaves little doubt that there is a tremendous audience to be plumbed that consists of Christians with Bible-based principles that help govern our lives (some would say conservative Bible-based principles) — people who are willing to plow down good money to be entertained by the proper products.

Money means everything to Hollywood types. With the enthusiastic audiences behind these two products, there is inescapable proof that there are many like us out here, no matter how many times the fake news media put us down as an ignorant minority.

Enough of us to give a TV series historical ratings. Enough of us to make a movie one of the biggest success stories of the year. Enough of us to win Mississippi and the world to Jesus.

Let's get busy on that last one. There may not be much time left.

## Revitalization

**T**he call to be a church revitalizer is a hard call. Although church revitalizers can come in many varieties and skill sets, there are three qualities we must seek in our leadership among God's people.

Ecclesiastes tells us, "a threefold cord is not quickly broken." Likewise, a pastor who emphasizes the following three roles in his ministry will be more likely to find his leadership stronger, durable, and enduring.

■ First, we are to lead from the front. Borrowing a sports metaphor, we are to be the coach of the team to whom God has called us. The people have to believe we know the plays and that we not only know where we are going (vision), but that we can guide them there (leadership).

Leading from the front means we are championing the mission of the church by dreaming, casting vision, and inspiring others to follow. When I was ordained, my pastor challenged me by stating that the leader will either be a spark plug or a flat tire. My friends, be the spark plug!

There are few hindrances greater to revitalization than flat tire preachers. If you are the flat tire in your church's revitalization effort, it is time to either change or be changed.

■ As we seek to lead from the front, we must be careful not to charge so far and fast ahead of our people they mistake us for an enemy and open fire. This is where the second prong is utterly necessary. We must lead from the middle, as a team captain working alongside the team for every victory.

I strive to never miss a work day, to arrive early and leave late, and be among my people as much as possible. There is a saying, "The shepherd must smell like the sheep," and nothing can be more important to a church revitalizer than to get dirty and work hard among their people. We must pastor without a safety net and without an escape plan. When we pastor our people



**Guest opinion**  
with Scott Brown

well, they will follow farther and harder when they really believe you love them, and you must love them!

■ While we love them as their pastor, we will also take on the third prong of being the cheerleader by leading our people from the back. Celebrate every victory and minimize every failure. Barnabas is our obvious example in Scripture as someone who leads from the back, pushing others to find their gifts and pushing them to outshine even himself.

Encourage your people every chance you get, celebrate even the smallest victories, and praise God publicly for all He does. A great tool I've used is the Soul Winner's Candle. This is a candle I place somewhere that's very visible in our sanctuary, and whenever someone is saved as a direct result of our prayers, service, sharing, or sacrificing, then the one most responsible comes forward to light it before the service. When we see that flame, it has served to build momentum, celebrate personal evangelism, and give us another excuse to celebrate Jesus together.

If you want to see your church come alive, then you must be coach, captain, and cheerleader. These three prongs together in you, as pastor, will give power to your leadership and change your church for His glory.

Brown is pastor of First Church, Waverly, TN. This commentary first appeared in the *Baptist and Reflector* ([baptistandreflector.org](http://baptistandreflector.org)), newsjournal of the Tennessee Baptist Convention, and appears here courtesy of *Baptist Press*. Edited for style and clarity.

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### BAPTISTS

VOLUME 142 • NUMBER 14 • ISSN-0005-5776  
Published weekly except weeks of July 4 and Christmas by the Mississippi Baptist Convention Board, 515 Mississippi Street, Jackson, MS 39201. Subscription \$11.99 per year payable in advance. Economy plans available for cooperating Mississippi churches. Periodicals postage paid at Jackson, MS. Member, Association of State Baptist Papers. Deadlines: News items — one calendar week prior to requested publication date. Advertising — two calendar weeks prior to requested publication date. All submissions are subject to editing.

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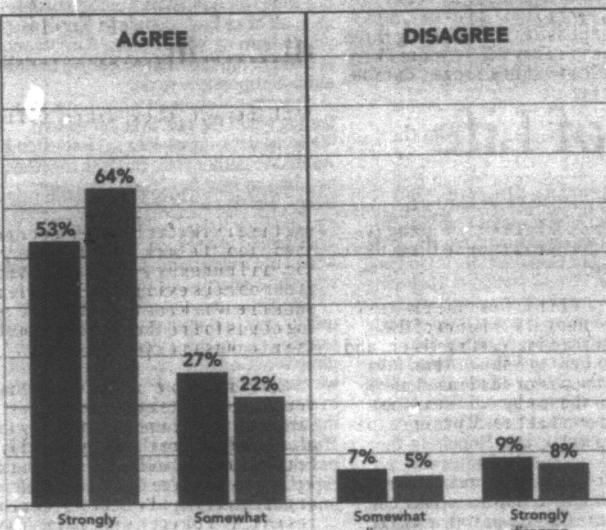
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# LifeWay Research: Diversity attitudes improving

## My church is predominantly one racial or ethnic group

Among Protestant pastors

■ 2017 ■ 2013



Notes: 2% not sure in 2017 & 1% not sure in 2013.  
May not equal 100% due to rounding.

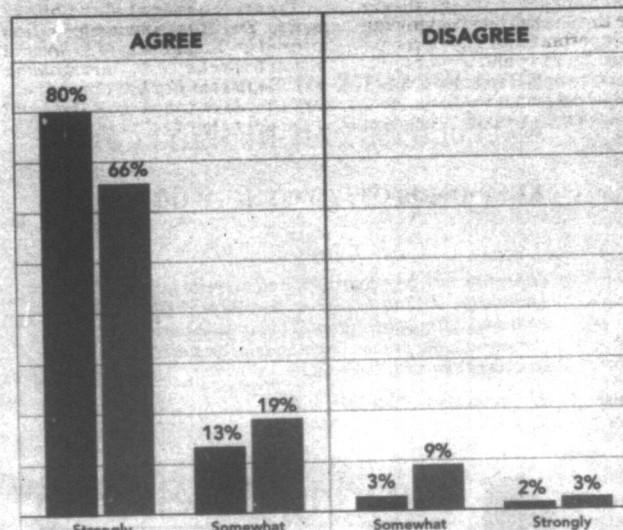
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## Every church should strive to achieve racial diversity

Among Protestant pastors

■ 2017 ■ 2013



Notes: 3% not sure in both 2017 & 2013.  
May not equal 100% due to rounding.

**NASHVILLE (BP)** — Protestant churches may be a little more diverse these days and that's a good thing, their pastors say in a new study released March 20 by LifeWay Research, the arm of LifeWay Christian Resources of the Southern Baptist Convention in Nashville that specializes in surveys about faith in culture and matters that affect churches.

Eighty-one percent of Protestant pastors say their congregation is predominantly made up of one racial or ethnic group. That's down from 86% four years ago, according to the study conducted this past Aug. 30-Sept. 18.

It's a small but significant step in a nation where Sunday mornings often remain segregated, says Scott McConnell, executive director of LifeWay Research.

"Protestant churches are still mostly divided by race but they're heading in the right direction," he asserts.

### Pastors want it

Lifeway Research surveyed 1,000 Protestant pastors last fall about racial diversity in their congregations and then compared the results to a similar survey in 2013. In the most recent survey, 93% of pastors — including 80% of that total who chose "strongly agree" — say every church should strive to achieve racial diversity. Four percent disagree. Three percent are not sure.

Four years earlier, 85% of pastors agreed churches should strive for diversity. That included 66% who strongly agreed, while 12% disagreed and three percent weren't sure.

Ninety-six percent of pastors in the South who were surveyed are more likely than pastors in other regions to say churches should strive for diversity. White pastors (94%) are more likely to agree than pastors from other ethnic backgrounds (86%), while 88% of African American pastors agree churches should strive for diversity. Lutheran pastors are least likely (82%) to agree when compared to pastors in other denominations.

When it comes to congregation diversity, 81% of pastors in the latest survey say their church mostly consists of one racial group. Sixteen percent disagree. Three percent are not sure.

Pastors of larger churches (250 or more attenders) were least likely (74%) to say their church is made up mostly of one ethnicity. That jumps to 81% for churches with 249 or fewer attenders.

Based on denominational affiliation, Lutheran pastors (89%) are most likely to say their church is made up of predominantly one ethnic group. Baptist (81%), Presbyterian/Reformed (77%), and Pentecostal pastors (68%) are less likely to say their church is made up of predominantly one ethnic group.

### Not afraid to talk

Racial reconciliation is a fairly common topic for pastors to address, LifeWay Research reports.

Sixty-three percent of pastors say they speak about racial reconciliation in sermons or large group messages at least a few times a year. Thirty-nine percent talk about it several times a year, nine percent discuss racial reconciliation several times a month, and 14% do so about once a month.

"Pastors want their congregations to be more diverse because their communities are more diverse, but people in the pews aren't there yet. There are hard cultural divides to overcome."

**Scott McConnell**

executive director of  
LifeWay Research

For a significant number of Protestant pastors (37%), addressing racial reconciliation is not a high priority. Twelve percent address the topic about once a year. About a quarter either rarely (17%) or never (four percent) address racial reconciliation or don't know (four percent).

Pastors are likely to be working on reconciliation in their personal lives, McConnell says. He pointed to a 2016 LifeWay Research survey, which showed most Protestant pastors (57%) spent time socializing with neighbors of other ethnicities. Seventy-two percent had a meal in the previous month with someone of another ethnicity.

However, McConnell says it's not clear that people in the pew will embrace racial reconciliation.

A 2014 LifeWay Research study found two-thirds of American churchgoers felt their church had done enough to become diverse, and 40% said their church needed to become more diverse.

More than half of churchgoers disagreed when asked if their church needed to become more ethnically diverse. That included a third who strongly disagreed.

Evangelical churchgoers were most likely to say their church is diverse enough (71%). White churchgoers were least likely to say their church should become more diverse (37%). African Americans (51%) and Hispanic-Americans (47%) were more likely to say their church needs to be more diverse.

The question of diversity will likely become more pressing for churches in the future, McConnell predicts. About half of the children under age 10 in the United States are ethnic minorities, according to the U.S. Census Bureau.

"Pastors want their congregations to be more diverse because their communities are more diverse," McConnell points out, "but people in the pews aren't there yet. There are hard cultural divides to overcome."

### Methodology

The phone survey of 1,000 Protestant pastors was conducted Aug. 30 - Sept. 18, 2017. The calling list was a stratified random sample, drawn from a list of all Protestant churches. Quotas were used for church size. Each interview was conducted with the senior pastor, minister, or priest of the church called. Responses were weighted by region to more accurately reflect the population. The completed sample is 1,000 surveys. The sample provides 95% confidence that the sampling error does not exceed plus or minus 3.2%. Margins of error are higher in subgroups. Comparisons are also made to a telephone survey of 1,007 pastors using the same methodology Sept. 4-19, 2013, and 1,000 pastors Sept. 11-18, 2014.

**H**ave you ever seen an accident in progress? I mean the kind of traffic accident you can see with your eyes and recognize what's about to happen but you can't think through it quick enough to do anything about it. Late one afternoon I was driving down the road here in the Capitol City when I saw an oncoming line of traffic stopped behind a car that had its blinker on waiting to turn. Behind that car were about five other cars waiting for him to turn that, I assumed, were going to turn also, but then behind all of them I saw a car coming fast - real fast, especially for a congested traffic area. It appeared to me the driver was not going to brake and probably didn't even notice the cars in front of him. My initial thought was that he or she may have been blinded by the sun that was setting. All that said, I was watching it happen right in front of me. There was nothing I could do.

In those quick few seconds I saw this unfolding, I realized a crash was about to take place, or I thought it was, and although I'm not a prophet I was correct in my assessment. The thought also occurred to me in those quick seconds that the driver, when he finally saw there were cars stopped in front of him, possibly would swerve to his right or left to miss those cars but find himself turning directly into oncoming traffic or go off the road and wreck his car on the other side of the road. What took place was what I initially thought was going to take place. The driver smashed into the back of the last car in the line, which was then knocked into the car in front of him, which was then



**Directions**

With Jim Fetrel, executive director-treasurer  
Mississippi Baptist Convention Board

## Unavoidables of Life

kicked into the car in front of him. There was absolutely nothing I could do except watch and cringe all at the same time.

I stopped just past the crash. Several cars were damaged but no one was seriously injured. I was thankful there was no loss of life. I stayed until the first responders got there with medical help and the police began the process of figuring out what had taken place. After talking with some of them, I went on my way.

I thought about how many, many times we see crashes about to take place and wonder what we can do. Sometimes we cannot come up with any possible help we can offer in the few seconds before the crash. I thought how often our Heavenly Father sees us cruising along in life, self-absorbed with our daily activities,

with dangers all around us. Maybe the brightness of the sun's light is shining in our eyes and we do not even recognize the crash ahead, but God does. He is God and He can act on His own will, but He lovingly allows us to drive our cars and make our decisions and move forward even though He may be influencing us otherwise.

He desires that our wills be tuned into His will, but the choices of life are handed to us and too often we ignore Him. Hopefully, we or those we love will hit the brakes before it's too late. Hopefully, the damage we do will not be irreparable. I wonder as He watches how many times He would just love to stop everything, talk to us, and give us stern words that would cause us to realize we better not go where we're headed as fast as we're going.

All of us have experienced that to some degree. We have seen folks in our lives, our families, our circles of work or influence, going down wrong roads extremely fast, headed toward a ditch or a crash and there's nothing we can do about it. Parents experience that with children who, in spite of all the instruction and love and care we give them, are headed for a crash but they will not listen. Pastors, professors, all of us have people in our lives with whom we wish we could intervene at least to tap the brakes, but we find that almost impossible to do.

I've often wondered what Jesus was feeling when He said over Jerusalem, "O Jerusalem, Jerusalem ... How often I wanted to gather your children together, as a hen gathers her brood under her wings, but you were not willing!" (Luke 13:34). They would not listen to Him. They would not respond to Him. They would not follow Him, and they went on with their rejection of Him.

There are unavoidables in life, but I quickly say that though some people are just determined to go too fast in a wrong direction, God does speak to people and we can pray for them. Trust God to work in their lives so that whatever is taking place, they will eventually turn to Him and find help and hope, rescue and redemption. Don't avoid turning to God, especially when you're dealing with the unavoidables of life.

The author can be contacted at directions@mbcb.org.

## College News



**MISSISSIPPI COLLEGE** dedicated the Rhoda Royce Prayer Garden on the school's Clinton campus in honor of the wife of retiring school president Lee Royce, for her tutoring of young Christian students for the past 16 years and her active promotion of the Baptist-affiliated university. Located near Alumni Hall, the garden was made possible by an anonymous donor.



**MISSISSIPPI COLLEGE** honored retiring professor Dr. Edith Carlisle for her 18 years of service at a March 22 reception. Coordinator of the school counseling program, Carlisle also served as the founding president of the Mississippi Marriage and Family Association and former president of the Mississippi Counseling Association. Carlisle is pictured with retiring MC president Lee Royce.

## Revivals & Homecomings

► **Elliston Church, Blue Springs:** one-year anniversary, April 22, 10:30 a.m.; Bert Harper, speaker, along with other special guests participating.

► **Horseshoe Church, Tchula:** spring revival, April 15-18, 11 a.m. Sunday and 7 p.m. each evening; Sun., Luke Johnson, speaker; Mon.-Wed., Wayne Hudson, speaker; Mike Steen, pastor.

► **First Church, Morton:** revival, April 22-25; 7 p.m. each evening; Larry Duncan, speaker; Tal Vardaman, worship leader. For more information, call (601) 732-8941.

► **Benton Church, Benton:** revival April 15-17; Sun. worship times, 10:30 a.m. and 5 p.m.; Mon.-Tues., 7 p.m.; Gary Richardson, speaker; Gil Powell, worship leader. Charles Moore, pastor.

► **Pleasant Grove Church, Gore Springs:** spring revival, April 8-11; Sun., 6 p.m.; Mon.-Wed., 7 p.m.; Lynn Potts, speaker. Hamilton and Ruby Morrison, worship leaders. Artistic drawing pertaining to message each night by wife of Lynn Potts. Johnny Dunn, pastor.

## BIBLIOGRAPHY

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ENKA FSUYS UK UT SOEGOT REC

WALVUGO CAI CAIL HLOKMEKKOK.

RELP ONOGOT: HFOTHC-WUGO

Clue: F = W

Have fun with cryptography and exercise your Bible knowledge. A King James Version Bible verse has been encoded by letter substitution. The same letter is substituted throughout the puzzle. Solve by trial and error. Answer to last week's puzzle: Luke 18:16

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# HOUSE TOPS.

Matthew 10:27 NAS

April 5, 2018

HouseTops is a Baptist Record supplement produced by the Mississippi Baptist Convention Board's **Communication Services**.

## IT'S 2018!



Time to apply for scholarships with the Mississippi Baptist Foundation!

Our policy, deadline, and applications have changed. Please visit our website to review the 2018 policy and submit an application before April 30.

Call us at 601.292.3210 or visit [www.msbf.org](http://www.msbf.org) for more info.

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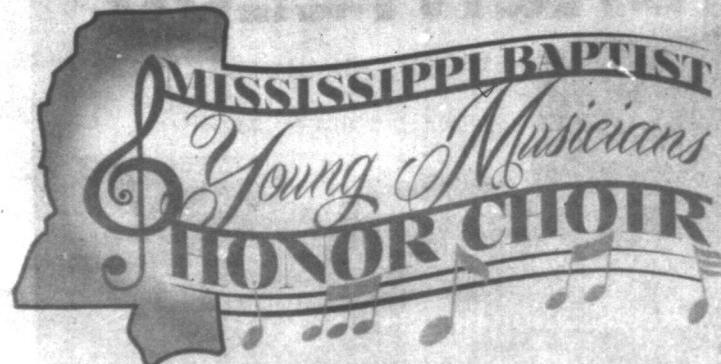
### BIVOCATIONAL PASTORS – SAVE THE DATE

P/LD is excited to host Bivocational Pastors/Wives Dialogue Dinners in 2018! The purpose is to discuss new strategies for resourcing Bivo pastors throughout our state based on 2017 survey results.

Join us at one of the following locations:

- April 5 – Hattiesburg
- April 19 – Grenada
- April 12 – Flowood
- April 26 – Gulfport

For additional information, contact the Pastor/Leadership Development Department at [vclary@mbcb.org](mailto:vclary@mbcb.org) or 601-292-3305.



### Young Musicians Honor Choir CONCERT

Saturday, April 21, 2018  
6:30 p.m.

Brandon Baptist Church

Contact the Church Music Department at 601-292-3267  
for more information.

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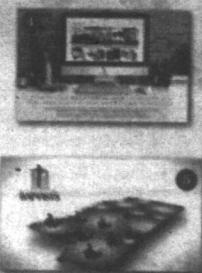
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## FREE 2018 YOUTH NIGHT

"It is for freedom that Christ has set us free.  
Stand firm, then, and do not let yourselves be burdened again by a yoke of slavery."  
— Galatians 3:1 —



**FRIDAY, JUNE 1, 2018**  
**6:30-8:30 P.M.**  
**MISSISSIPPI COLISEUM, JACKSON**

Speaker: JASON CURRY | Band: BROKEN VESSELS

No cost. No registration. Missions offering taken.

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MBCB CONNECT CAMPS 2018

## DAUNTLESS

Central Hills Baptist Retreat

Registration begins February 1, 2018  
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Session 1: June 4-7

Session 2: June 7-10

Session 3: June 12-15

Please contact Tony Martin at [tmartin@mbcb.org](mailto:tmartin@mbcb.org) or  
601-292-3278 for further information.

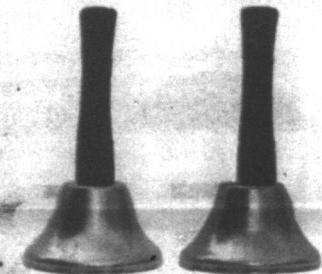


If you would like to be certified in teaching English as a second language, tutoring children and youth, or adult reading and writing, this conference is for you. Additional training will be offered for certified tutors. Sponsored by WMUWM. For more information, visit [www.mbc.org/event/state-literacy-missions-training](http://www.mbc.org/event/state-literacy-missions-training) or contact Cindy Heimbach, State Literacy Missions Coordinator, at [cindyheimbach@nan.com](mailto:cindyheimbach@nan.com) or 662-417-3944.

## Mississippi Baptist Handbell Festival

April 13-14, 2018

First Baptist Church, Raymond



Contact the Church Music Department at [cwtaylor@mbcb.org](mailto:cwtaylor@mbcb.org) or 601.292.3267 for more information.

### STATE BIBLE DRILLS

**Weekday Drills**  
2:00 p.m. – 5:00 p.m.

**Saturday Drill**  
10:00 a.m. – 1:00 p.m.

TUESDAY, APRIL 17  
FBC, McComb  
Emmanuel BC, Grenada

THURSDAY, APRIL 19  
Harrisburg BC, Tupelo  
Carterville BC, Petal

SATURDAY, APRIL 21  
Crossgates BC, Brandon  
Poplar Springs Dr BC,  
Meridian

TUESDAY, APRIL 24  
FBC, Madison  
Hillcrest BC, New Albany

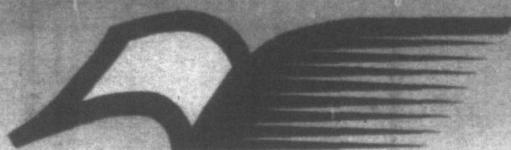
THURSDAY, APRIL 26  
FBC, Starkville  
North Oxford BC, Oxford

SATURDAY, APRIL 28  
FBC, Clinton  
(Selection Tournament)

Visit <http://www.mbc.org/bible-drill/> for more details and resources.

Contact the Discipleship and Family Ministry Department at [tpresson@mbcb.org](mailto:tpresson@mbcb.org) for more info.

MISSISSIPPI



BAPTISTS  
CHURCH LIBRARY MINISTRY

### 47th Annual State Church Library Ministry Conference

September 29, 2018  
First Baptist Church, Madison  
8 a.m. – 4 p.m.

Registration Deadline: September 14, 2018

For more information, contact Communication Services at 601-292-3378 or [jchen@mbcb.org](mailto:jchen@mbcb.org).

Pray this day for...

April 6 - April 19, 2018

*"praying at all times in the Spirit... To that end keep alert with perseverance, making supplication for all the saints..."  
Ephesians 6:18 (ESV)*

Pray for: **Earl & Ramona Hewitt**, missionaries ministering to Sub-Saharan African Peoples through medicine & church/home outreach evangelism.

Pray for: **Timothy & Rebecca Lightsey**, missionaries ministering to American Peoples through strategy coordination & church/home outreach evangelism.

Pray for: **Cynthia Hodgin**, missionary ministering to Deaf Peoples through church/home outreach evangelism.

Pray for: **Robert Mooney**, missionary ministering to European Peoples through strategy coordination.

Pray for: **Jeffery & Liesa Holman**, missionaries ministering to American Peoples through strategy coordination.

Pray for: **Stephen & Svetlana Parish**, missionaries ministering to European Peoples through strategy coordination & church/home outreach evangelism.

Pray for: **Ronald & Beverly Holmes**, missionaries ministering to European Peoples through church planting & church/home outreach evangelism.

Pray for: **Kevin & Brenda Peacock**, missionaries ministering to European Peoples through theological education & church/home outreach evangelism.

Pray for: **Daniel & Claudia Hood**, missionaries ministering to Northern African & Middle Eastern Peoples through general evangelism & church/home outreach evangelism.

Pray for: **Michael & Sarah Prewitt**, missionaries ministering to European Peoples through church planting & church/home outreach evangelism.

Pray for: **Clarence Frank & Phoebe Harrison**, missionaries ministering to American Peoples.

Pray for: **Millard Jones**, missionary ministering to European Peoples through church/home outreach evangelism.

Pray for: **Kenneth & Kimberly Hatchcock**, missionaries ministering to European Peoples through student evangelism & church/home outreach evangelism.

Pray for: **Susan Jones**, missionary ministering to East Asian Peoples through student evangelism.



Mr. Ethan Thomas  
4/17/01

Parents: Andy & Michelle  
Western Europe

Mr. Jack  
6/8/17

Parents: C & A  
Restricted

Miss Jill  
6/8/17

Parents: C & A  
Restricted

Miss Katie  
6/14/13

Parents: R & M  
Restricted

Mr. Sam  
6/15/13  
Parents: C & A  
Restricted

To Be Sent May 25, 2018, by the WMU Office

**PLEASE NOTE THE TIMING:** Thank you for your love and support of MKs by sending Birthday cards! Because of the sending to other countries, there is a need to get cards sent a month ahead of birthday. As soon as the list is in the Baptist Record, please send the cards and not wait until a couple of weeks before the date of the birthday. It is posted two months ahead to give time to receive cards and then to mail them a month ahead of time to insure arrival around birthday. Again, thank you for being a blessing to so many with this ministry!

**NOTE:** Church members may send a package of cards together; cards do not have to be sent individually to the WMU. Individual cards do not need postage stamps when sent as a package to MS WMU.

**FOR SECURITY:** cards will be forwarded. Please send all to MBCB WMU MK Birthdays, PO Box 530, Jackson, MS 39205.

Please include your return address on each card envelope. MKs and their parents may wish to send you an update or note of appreciation.

**MISSISSIPPI BAPTIST SENIOR ADULT CHOIR FESTIVAL**  
5.8.18  
McLaurin Heights Baptist Church

Register at <https://tinyurl.com/SenAdultChoirFest> and contact Church Music at 601-292-3267 for more information.

## Mississippi Baptist Symphony Orchestra WORSHIP CONCERT

April 22, 2018  
6:00 p.m.

First Baptist Church  
Laurel, MS

Contact the Church Music Department at 601.292.3267 or [cwtaylor@mbcb.org](mailto:cwtaylor@mbcb.org) for more information.

MARGARET LACKEY OFFERING FOR STATE MISSIONS

**MISSISSIPPI**  
*Tell this People*

ISAIAH 6:9A

Contact Mission Strategy at 601-292-3231, or [bbridges@mbcb.org](mailto:bbridges@mbcb.org) for more information.

**HOUSE TOPS**

# Pastor missing for over a year; family suffering

KUALA LUMPUR, Malaysia (BP) — A Malaysian pastor threatened with death for trying to convert Muslims to Christianity remains missing more than a year after his kidnapping in Kuala Lumpur, a family friend confirmed to Baptist Press (BP) on March 26.



KOH

The family of 63-year-old Raymond Koh has heard nothing of his whereabouts or health since his abduction by as many as a dozen masked men in broad daylight, family friend and Nashville-area pastor Greg Wilton told BP.

"They've really suffered, suffered psychologically," said Wilton, who met Koh before becoming missions pastor of the Long

Hollow Church in Hendersonville, Tenn., in January 2017, "and yet through it all, God's given them a tremendous amount of... assurance that even though they may not see him in this life, they are totally certain that they will see him in the next life."

Koh pastored an Evangelical Free Church of Malaysia for 20 years before founding Harapan Komuniti in Malaysia in 2004, a community-based outreach to single mothers, drug addicts, and HIV/AIDS victims, according to Open Doors USA.

Workers at Harapan Komuniti were instructed not to try to proselytize people the outreach served, Koh's wife Susanna Liew Soh Yoke said, but days before Koh's disappearance the family received death threats for spreading the Gospel.

Wilton communicates weekly with the family through texts,

praying for Susanna, and Koh's three adult children, he told BP.

"The family has a tremendous faith in God right now, still believing and trusting that he could show up at any moment, [any] day," Wilton said, "but they also find that their faith is most solid and secure in Jesus... knowing that Jesus takes care of them even in the darkest of situations."

Many religious liberty groups are advocating for Koh's return, but an official inquiry of the Human Rights Commission of Malaysia has been on hold since January when Malaysian police arrested Lam Chang Nam as a suspect in the kidnapping.

Koh's wife and other advocates believe the arrest is a deliberate attempt to halt the inquiry, which Malaysian law prohibits as long as court proceedings are active against a suspect. Lam, 31,

was originally charged in March 2017 with trying to extort a ransom of about \$8,000 from Koh's son Jonathan, World Watch Monitor reported in January.

"Why is he being charged with kidnapping now, after a lapse of several months and just a day before the inquiry resumed?" his wife said in a plea for his release at OpenDoorsUSA.com. "If he really is involved, then he should know where Raymond is now. Bring him out and let the perpetrators be apprehended and justice served."

Koh is among at least four missing persons the Human Rights Commission is investigating, including pastor Joshua Hilmay and his wife Ruth who were reported missing in March 2017, according to World Watch.

In Malaysia, a Muslim country under Sharia law, trying to convert Muslims to Christianity

is constitutionally illegal, and the Open Doors World 2018 Watch List ranks Malaysia as 23rd among the 50 countries where Christians are the most persecuted.

Wilton encouraged Southern Baptists to support Koh's family by praying for them and taking any available steps to spread the Gospel in Malaysia.

"Southern Baptists can do what Raymond always did, which is do everything that he can to love Malaysians and share the Gospel with them," Wilton told BP. "Continue to pray and to love all people of Malaysia."

Koh's family maintains a webpage at FindRaymondKoh.com. The Human Rights Commission, Open Doors, World Watch, and the World Council of Churches are among groups that have advocated for Koh's return.

## MS POSITIONS

GALILEE BAPTIST CHURCH 14150 HWY 472 HAZELHURST IS LOOKING FOR A PIANO PLAYER. For information please contact Les or Beverly Rodgers @ 601-940-3542 or 601-572-0364.

DREW BAPTIST CHURCH IS SEEKING A BI-VOCATIONAL PASTOR—Please email resume to drewbaptistchurch@gmail.com or U S mail to Drew Baptist Church, 139 S Church St., Drew, MS 38737.

SPRINGDALE BAPTIST IN RIPLEY IS ACCEPTING RESUMES FOR THE POSITION OF ASSOCIATE PASTOR/YOUTH MINISTER. Applicants should E-mail resumes to smckee2003@yahoo.com.

CRENSHAW BAPTIST CHURCH IS IN NEED OF A PART TIME SONG LEADER. Please call Nathan Perry at 901-606-4086

INDIAN SPRINGS BAPTIST CHURCH IN LAUREL, MS IS SEEKING A FULL TIME MINISTER OF STUDENTS/ACTIVITIES AND A PART TIME BI-VOCATIONAL MINISTER OF MUSIC. Send resumes to the Personnel Committee, Indian Springs Baptist Church, 500 Indian Springs Church Road, Laurel, MS 39443.

MIDWAY BAPTIST CHURCH - LUCEDALE, MS IS SEEKING A BI-VOCATIONAL PASTOR. Send resume to: Midway Baptist Church, Attn: Pastor Search Committee 2209 Howell Tanner Chapel Rd. Lucedale, MS 39452. Or via Email: clyde@imc Clyde.com

NEW HOPE BAPTIST CHURCH, MONTICELLO, MS SEEKING BI-VOCATIONAL MUSIC MINISTER. Send Resumes To: 618 Carmel-New Hope Rd, Monticello, MS 39064 Ph. 601-587-2862

## PAGE

cont. from p. 1

Dr. Page's repentance and deep regret that his actions have caused pain for others.

"My heart is broken for Dr. Page, his family and everyone affected," Rummage stated. "I believe I speak for the entire Executive Committee in saying that we are committed to provide them the spiritual and emotional support they need in the coming days. We also recognize the stewardship we owe Southern Baptists and the watching world to communicate with truth and candor and to honor the Lord in our actions and decisions.

"I call upon all Southern Baptists to pray for everyone involved in a situation like this, and especially for Dr. and Mrs. Page. Please pray for the Southern Baptist Convention and all that is entrusted to the Executive Committee."

"As officers, we are committed to provide leadership that the Southern Baptist Convention will recognize and trust. To those ends, in keeping with our Executive Committee bylaws, we will be working on a plan to provide for interim transition in the wake of Dr. Page's immediate departure and also to conduct a search for the next president and CEO of the SBC Executive Committee. I am personally counting on the prayers of Southern Baptists, as I know are all who serve on our SBC Executive Committee."

Rummage has called a special meeting of the Executive Committee for April 17, according to a letter mailed to EC members on March 29.

Baptist Press reported April 2 that during the special meeting, Rummage "will provide on behalf of the officers a report of activities related to Page's un-

"I call upon all Southern Baptists to pray for everyone involved in a situation like this, and especially for Dr. and Mrs. Page. Please pray for the Southern Baptist Convention and all that is entrusted to the Executive Committee."

Stephen Rummage

chairman of the SBC Executive Committee

expected departure, in which Page acknowledged 'a personal failure' in retiring from active ministry."

Page released a statement as well on the afternoon of his resignation.

"It is with deep regret that I tender my resignation from the SBC Executive Committee and announce my retirement from active ministry, effective immediately. As a result of a personal failing, I have embarrassed my family, my Lord, myself, and the Kingdom. Out of a desire to protect my family and those I have hurt, I initially announced my retirement earlier today without a complete explanation. However, after further wrestling with my personal indiscretion, it became apparent to me that this situation must be acknowledged in a more forthright manner. It is my most earnest desire in the days to come to rebuild the fabric of trust with my wife and daughters, those who know me best and love me most."

The EC president holds key roles in coordinating the work of the SBC's national ministries encompassing two mission boards, six seminaries, and other entities; overseeing a Cooperative Program budget

of nearly \$200 million yearly, and building relationships with 42 state and regional Baptist conventions and 47,000-plus Southern Baptist churches in all 50 states.

In addition, the EC permits the president to accept interim pastorates, supply preaching invitations, revivals, and appearances on national news media representing the SBC.

Page served for two years as interim pastor at First Church, Jackson, which issued the following statement on March 28.

"We were saddened to learn of Dr. Frank Page's resignation and the reasons surrounding that announcement. Dr. Page has done much to help and lead Southern Baptists over the years. He has been a friend and supporter of First Baptist Jackson as well, having served as an interim pastor [from] 2011-2013.

"First Baptist Jackson joins together with many others in earnest prayer not only for Dr. Page and his family but all those affected by this situation, including Dr. Rummage and other Southern Baptist leaders as they begin the search process to identify a new president and CEO of the SBC Executive Committee."

Page, a native of Greensboro, N.C., served two consecutive terms as SBC president from 2006-2008 while pastor of First Church in Taylors, S.C. Before being elected as Executive Committee president in 2010, Page served from 2009-2010 as vice president of evangelization for the North American Mission Board.

Page and his wife Dayle have two daughters, Laura and Allison. A third daughter, Melissa, committed suicide in 2009, a matter about which Frank Page has written extensively.

*Editor's note: William Perkins, editor of The Baptist Record, contributed to this article.*

## CLASSIFIEDS

FOR SALE IN PARKWAY MEMORIAL CEMETERY. Highland Colony Parkway, Ridgeland 2 street-side adjoining spaces close to Funeral Chapel in SUNSET GARDEN, Lot 48, Section A. Spaces 1 & 2, 15% discount from PMC appraisal, 601-924-7407.

FIRST BAPTIST SHANNON'S 150TH CELEBRATION IS 11/2018, and are seeking past staff and members with any photos, history or info. 662-767-3948, connect@fbcsannon.com

MIDWAY BAPTIST CHURCH IN NEWTON COUNTY IS IN NEED OF A GOOD USED OR NEW 15-PASSENGER VAN OR BUS FOR YOUTH AND MISSION MINISTRY. Any Church needing to upgrade, please contact Midway Church Treasurer at 601-479-4083! Any donations or contributions would be greatly appreciated.

AFFORDABLE BEACHSIDE VACATION CONDOS: GULF SHORES & ORANGE BEACH, AL. Rent direct from Christian Family Owners, lowest prices on the Beach, www.gulfshorescondos.com, 251-656-4935, 205-566-0368, 251-752-2366.

WWW.SEBRENHOMECOMPROVEMENT.COM. Christian owned Don & Rita Seben. 601-992-2092. All home improvements, siding, energy efficient windows, metal & shingle roofs, screen & sunrooms, patio covers, decks, room additions, kitchen & bath upgrades.

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PULPIT SUPPLY AVAILABLE: Retired Southern Baptist Navy chaplain available for Sunday pulpit supply on short notice (pastor illness, vacation, rest, etc.), 100 mile radius of Hattiesburg, Deacon of Hardy Street Baptist Church, Graduate of New Orleans Baptist and Fuller Theological Seminaries. References available. Compensation unimportant. Contact him at 601-406-4608 or benjyhornaby.com

HEIDELBERG STAINED GLASS, MERIDIAN, DESIGN, FABRICATION, REPAIR. Heidelbergstainedglass.com or call wk 601-483-7958 or cell 601-616-1390.

## REBUILD

cont. from p. 1

light of the Gospel shines hope, even in the deepest darkness.

Pomeroy said the new facilities will put the church in an even better position to serve others. "We are grateful for the outpouring of prayers, for the love that we have felt. So many have done so much for us, and it has been a huge blessing."

"The purpose of these new buildings will be to serve God and serve others. That is why we exist."

Kevin Ezell, president of the Southern Baptist North American Mission Board (NAMB) in Alpharetta, Ga., raised the issue of a new building with Pomeroy in a conversation near the end of 2017.

NAMB asked Myrick Gurosky and Associates (MG&A) in Birmingham, Al., to lead in the development, design, and construction of the buildings. MG&A has worked closely with Pomeroy and leaders of the church in developing designs. MG&A specializes in the management of design and construction and has worked on hundreds of church projects across the country.

"We are grateful to play a small part in the healing journey for our brothers and sisters in Sutherland Springs," Ezell said. "Southern Baptists were



devastated by what took place. We immediately knew that, as their Southern Baptist family we wanted to lock arms with them, doing whatever we could to help restore hope.

"We know a lot of people want to help, and fortunately our experience in facilitating and mobilizing partners, volunteers, donations, and prayer support in times of crisis has prepared us well to lead in a time such as this."

First Church, Sutherland Springs, is affiliated with the Southern Baptists of Texas Convention (SBCT). Jim Richards, SBTC executive director, responded to the construction an-

nouncement by saying, "I am so pleased that our North American Mission Board is committed to help First Baptist Church of Sutherland Springs. The Southern Baptists of Texas Convention remains involved with Pastor Pomeroy and his precious people through weekly calls and various types of help as they request it, but what a great expression of cooperative ministry when our national entities pitch in to help.

"NAMB's involvement represents 47,000 Southern Baptist sister churches lending strength to First Baptist Church of Sutherland Springs," Richards said. "We praise God for that encouragement."

Groups, organizations, and individuals wanting to donate to the project can visit NAMB.net and click, "Give." The link will take them to a special area for giving to the Sutherland Springs building effort.

Donations of services and materials can be given through the website [restoresutherlandsprings.com](http://restoresutherlandsprings.com).

"We have a lot of experience working with churches," said MG&A President Scott Gurosky, "but this situation is unique. Already my team and I have been deeply moved by the faith, courage, and perseverance that pastor Frank and his congregation have shown."

"We are excited to give them this opportunity to move forward in faith toward a new beginning."

The planned worship center features an exterior of stone and glass. Two towers on the corners of the building will emanate glowing light. Inside, the worship center will provide seating for 250 people. A memorial to the 26 people who lost their lives in the attack will be located in space between the worship center and the education facility.

The education building is designed to host classrooms for infant through adult attendees. A lighted, paved parking lot also will be included in the construction project.

MG&A and their consultants have donated hundreds of thou-

sands of dollars in development and design work. Gurosky said cost of the two buildings will be approximately three million dollars, but they anticipate that donations of materials and services will significantly reduce the final total.

"We have already been approached by several companies that want to help the people of this church and town," Gurosky said. "We want to give as many people as possible that opportunity, and it's our goal to find partners to help us complete the planned facilities so that actual cost of the work is minimal."

Construction on the property is being split into two phases. Phase 1 will include a worship center and education building. Funding for this phase is backed by NAMB with construction expected to begin in early May and a completion date anticipated for early 2019.

Plans for Phase 2 of the project include a multi-purpose community and activity center and will be funded from other sources.

NAMB will accept donations for the project. If donations do not cover all of the construction expenses, NAMB will cover any remaining costs.

*Editor's note: Architectural renderings by Myrick Gurosky and Associates, provided by NAMB.*

**PRAYERFULLY SEEKING EXECUTIVE DIRECTOR**

Candidates must have a master's degree (minimum) in Christian ministry field, have an impeccable character, and have exceptional leadership skills. The candidate should also demonstrate success in donor relations, written and verbal communication, fundraising and church relations. Resumes, along with a cover letter, testimony of salvation and calling to ministry, can be emailed to [execsearch@sbchomes.org](mailto:execsearch@sbchomes.org).

ABRAHAM BAPTIST CHILDREN'S HOME & FAMILY MINISTRIES

**SBC STRONG.ORG**

Cross Town is offering a \$300 package which includes travel, 3-night lodging and 3 meals to Dallas SBC Meeting June 10-13.

## Submission Guidelines

The Baptist Record is pleased to publish news and photographs of special events that take place in cooperating churches of the Mississippi Baptist Convention. News items and/or photographs depicting benefits and activities for secular or outside organizations will not be published.

Preferred method: news may be submitted electronically to the e-mail address below, and must be included in the message segment of an e-mail form. Secondary method: news may be typewritten or neatly printed on 8 1/2 by 11-inch paper and mailed. All articles must be received in writing; no articles will be accepted over the telephone. Due to ever-present virus threats, no text attachments will be accepted. Photograph attachments in JPEG format are permissible.

Please make articles concise. Include the who, what, when, where details of the story, along with a contact person's address and telephone number.

Photographs must be submitted electronically

via e-mail, as attachments in JPEG format. Hard copy photographs mailed through the postal service will not be accepted. Photographs must be clear, sharp, and well-lit. Photographs must depict people. No landscape, building, or object-only photographs will be printed. Photographs containing inappropriate gestures and objectionable clothing will not be published. Cell phone photographs and other low resolution items that do not reproduce well on newsprint are generally not publishable.

There is no guarantee that news items and/or photographs will be published, and unsolicited material will not be acknowledged or returned. All news items are subject to editing, and all photographs are subject to cropping. News items and/or photographs can be published one time only. Deadline for submitting news is one week prior to requested publication date. Articles that are not date-sensitive will be published on a space-available basis. These guidelines are not meant to be exhaustive.

Submit news to The Baptist Record, P.O. Box 530, Jackson, MS 39205-0530. FAX (601) 292-3330. E-mail: [baptistrecord@mccb.org](mailto:baptistrecord@mccb.org).

## Need a light?

Jesus said, "I am the light of the world. Whoever follows me will not walk in darkness but will have the light of life." (John 8:12)

Simply share the following prayer with God in your own words:

1. Lord, I admit that I need you. (I have sinned.)
2. I want forgiveness for my sins and freedom from eternal death. (I repent.)
3. I believe Jesus died and rose from the grave to forgive my sins and to restore my relationship with you. (I believe in Jesus.)
4. By faith, I invite Jesus Christ into my life. From this time on, I want to live in a loving relationship with Him. (I receive Christ as my Savior and Lord.)

"But as many as received him, to them he gave the right to become children of God, even to those who believe in his name." (John 1:12)

If you make a decision for Christ today, contact a local Southern Baptist church for spiritual guidance.

## Remembering the Sacrifice • 1 Corinthians 11:17-29

While serving as an IMB (International Mission Board) missionary, Ron was diagnosed with brain cancer. Although he had surgery, the relentless disease advanced, creating metastatic tumors in other cells and organs. At times, treatments brought glimmers of hope, but this past week, cancer won the earthly battle, and Ron passed away. The church where he had most recently served was filled for the memorial service, a fitting tribute to a man who lived the abundant life Jesus promised His followers (John 10:10), having had a profound influence on countless lives, both at home and in locales in distant lands.

Memorial services give those who remain behind a chance to remember friends and loved ones at the time of their passing. Though marked with somberness, it can be a happy, even a celebratory time as the contributions and positive influences of that special person are brought to mind.

As believers gather to observe (and celebrate) the Lord's Supper, they are called to reverently ponder and appreciate the supreme sacrifice of the spotless Lamb Who willingly suffered and died to secure their redemption. In today's lesson, the apostle Paul's continuation of his letter to the church at Corinth involved rebuke for irreverent behavior displayed as members gathered to observe this significant ordinance, and clarification of the proper way

to do so.

## Observing by worshipping

We should partake of the Lord's Supper in a worshipful manner. This lack of reverent contemplation was lacking in the Corinthians' gatherings for this event. Their manner of combining a fellowship meal with the ordinance is quite different than the way it is observed in most churches today. The New International Version Life Application Bible explains: "When the Lord's Supper was celebrated in the early church, it included a feast or fellowship meal followed by the celebration of Communion. In the church in Corinth, the fellowship meal had become a time when some ate and drank excessively and others went hungry....Paul condemned these actions and reminded the church of the real purpose of the Lord's Supper."

It seems some in this group of believers were not only disregarding the physical needs of others at the table (vs. 21), but they were using this time of assembling to voice

Explore the Bible  
with Ann Maniscalco

disagreements (verse 18-19). Paul says these meetings were doing "more harm than good" (1 Corinthians 11:17 NIV). They overlooked the holy purpose for gathering: "it is not the Lord's Supper you eat". Paul sternly reproved his readers. He said they should eat at home, rather than display self-gratifying actions that "despise the church of God" (vs. 21-22). Anything that distracts us from approaching this sacred time in a worshipful manner needs to be put aside.

## Observing by remembering

So what are we to remember when we partake of bread and cup? Paul reminded these early Christians of what he "received from the Lord" (vs.

23). Whether this information came during times of direct revelation (see Galatians 1:12), from the tradition shared by the original disciples, or possibly from Luke since it closely mirrors the account from his gospel (Luke 15:15-20), Paul had obviously already shared this teaching with the members of the church at Corinth (vs. 23). He reminded

them of the broken bread, representing Jesus' battered body that was suspended on the cross (vs. 24). In like manner, the deep-crimson liquid swirling in the cup as it was shared among the disciples depicted the Lord's life-blood that flowed from his torn flesh: "This cup is the new covenant in my blood; do this, whenever you drink it, in remembrance of me" (vs. 25). By joining with fellow members for this ordinance, Paul says we "proclaim the Lord's death until he comes" (vs. 26).

## Observing by examination

In verse 2, Paul warns this body of believers (and us as well) that to participate in an unworthy manner will cause a person to "be guilty of the body and blood of the Lord" (vs. 27 NKJV), and could incur God's judgment (vs. 29-30). After pointing out the ungodly behavior of his brothers and sisters in this congregation, Paul called for self-examination (vs. 28). Today, most pastors offer and encourage a similar time for members to lay their souls open before the Lord, that He might convict of sin and the need of repentance. Then we will, with prepared hearts, be ready to "eat of that bread and drink of that cup" (vs. 28) in a way that will honor Him.

*Maniscalco is a member of Emmanuel Baptist Church in Ocean Springs.*

## Our Shepherd • Psalm 23

The Bible often depicts us as sheep. Left to ourselves, we wander off and place ourselves in harm's way. We can't find our way back. The Bible also depicts God as the Shepherd over us. He is the one who gently guides us, protects us, and comforts us. Psalm 23 is one of the most beloved Psalms in scripture – one of my students once referred to it as one of "God's greatest hits!" Perhaps it is so well-known and quoted it has become too familiar to us. Familiar or not, it captures the picture of God as our loving shepherd.

## Psalm 23:1 – 3. Our shepherd gives us the guidance we need.

Most of us are far removed from sheep and shepherds. In Middle Eastern culture, sheep were totally dependent on their shepherds for their needs. The shepherd guarded them from wild animals, provided food and water for them, tracked them down when they wandered off, and generally took care of them. Of course, Jesus identified himself as the Good Shepherd, a metaphor his listeners would be very familiar with.

Note the three blessings in these verses, beginning with v. 2a. David experienced spiritual nourishment. God leads His people to places where they can be filled. Shepherds are expected to feed

their flocks; Jesus himself feeds us food for the soul.

Second, God gives spiritual restoration (v. 2b – 3a). Shepherds lead their sheep to quiet waters. The word translated "lead" means "to lead gently." Sheep can't be driven. They have to be led. Once they arrive at those still waters, they are able to rest and refresh themselves. God gives us all forgiveness and peace as His followers.

**T**hird, God guides us in the right way (v. 3b). Paths of righteousness! A good shepherd will be familiar with his grazing land, and can

properly lead his sheep to where the food is. He can also lead the sheep back home safely. God leads, but we have to follow.

## Psalm 23:4 – 5. Our shepherd walks with us in our difficulties.

This is the central verse of this psalm, and note how the personal pronoun change from "he" to "you." Now David isn't speaking about the shepherd; he's speaking to the shepherd.

Bible Studies for Life  
with Tony Martin

The valley of deep darkness ... the valley of death! What a vivid picture of what we all must pass through as a part of our relationship with God. The promise is that the Lord will be with us and will protect us. The shepherd's rod was heavily weighted so that he might ward off attackers, but the other end had the familiar crook used to herd and direct the sheep.

David was comforted by the presence of God. God is not aloof and distant. He promises to be right there with us every step of the way.

The scene shifts to a banquet hall.

The word "table" doesn't just mean a piece of furniture, but simply means "something spread out." God provides!

A shepherd may have had a long challenging day dealing with his sheep, so it was a joy to be able to finish the day in peace. The shepherd would often bring the sheep back into the fold, spread out food in a trough, and the sheep would lie down and rest after eating.

God does not promise to spare us from

grief and danger, but He does promise to help us overcome whatever challenges come our way.

## Psalm 23:6. Our shepherd gives us security.

The shepherd brings us all the way from the green pastures and the still waters to the Father's house. Traditionally, we visualize this psalm with David lying on his back in the grass, gazing heavenward, and surrounded by sheep. Most scholars believe that David was an old man when he wrote this. We can imagine he was looking back over his tumultuous life and realizing that he had been blessed with goodness and mercy and was ready to take his final rest.

There's some real comfort here, a security that can come in God alone. David had certainly had his share of failures, but that didn't change the favor he found with God, or eternity with Him in heaven. We have the opportunity to look back at the end of our earthly days and know the same security. In the old sacrificial system, the sheep died for the shepherd at the temple. Now, in Christ, the Shepherd died for the sheep. All the trials we've had on this earth will be made clear once we reach eternity in heaven.

*Martin is Associate Editor of The Baptist Record.*

## SURROGACY

*cont. from p. 1*

the intended parents.

Surrogates can be compensated for a total of two surrogacy agreements that result in children. There is no limit to how many surrogates a person can hire.

Surrogates have no claim

to the children they carry. The law states they have the right to "make all health and welfare decisions regarding pregnancy," an odd stipulation in light of the fact that almost all surrogates agree to contracts with a "termination clause" requiring them to abort the baby or babies at the request of the intended parents.

The intended parents are the

exclusive parents and assume financial responsibility for children once they are born.

Advocates for commercial surrogacy describe it as an altruistic act that helps infertile couples, but they also call for regulations to protect all parties, but there is no way to regulate the rental of a womb and the sale of a child, according to Jennifer

Lahl, president of the Center for Bioethics and Culture.

Lahl testified against the bill before members of the Washington legislature in February. She urged the committee to abandon efforts to regulate the industry and instead abolish surrogacy.

"Commercial surrogacy is indistinguishable from the buying and selling of babies. What is a

surrogate being paid to do? Gestate a baby and hand that baby over in exchange for money."

Lahl noted surrogacy is largely illegal in Europe. A European Parliament resolution passed in 2015 stated the practice undermines the dignity of women by using the reproductive body as a commodity, a form of violence against women.

## Just for the Record



**FIRST CHURCH, MORTON.** presented a plaque Mar. 18 in memory of Eugene Blackburn for the many years he served the church as deacon. Shown are deacon chairman David Hollingsworth, Jeanie Walker, Helen Blackburn, Buddy Powell, Joan Powell, and Marty Wilson.



Walter Butler, pastor, **BETHEL CHURCH, COLUMBUS,** was presented with a plaque in appreciation for 20 years of service. It was presented by music director John Mark Jolly.



**SHILOH CHURCH, HOULKA,** ordained Harold Dendy (left) and Robert Lynn McCormick (right) as deacons. Pictured with the new deacons is Kevin Brown, pastor.



Members of **WELLMAN CHURCH, LINCOLN ASSOCIATION,** recently visited the Center for Pregnancy Choices of Lawrence County and provided much needed assistance in the upkeep of the center. Jeff Davis, pastor.

### In other Church News:

► **Faith Church, Ovett,** is hosting the Crimson City Quartet from Mobile, Al., for a Gospel singing on April 7 at 7 p.m. Finger food fellowship will follow.

► **Ellistown Church, Blue Springs,** will host the Mississippi Singing Churchmen on April 16 at 7 p.m. For more information, call (662) 488-7228.

► **First Church, Runnelston,** will host Ivan Parker in a concert on April 28 at 7 p.m. A love offering will be taken. For more information, call (601) 583-3733. Hal Hood, pastor.



WMU members and daughters of **SILVER CREEK CHURCH, MCCOMB,** hosted Jeanine Mote, director of McComb's Crisis Pregnancy Center, Mar. 18. Items for the center are being collected in the baby bed.



**BAXTERVILLE CHURCH, LUMBERTON,** ordained Heath Lee on March 4. Lee is currently serving as minister of youth for the church. He is pictured with Ronald Alexander, pastor.



**PARKWAY CHURCH, HOUSTON,** ordained Jared Roberts to the Gospel ministry on March 11. He is pictured with his wife Emily and Randy Rhinehart, pastor.



**CENTER CHURCH, BLUE SPRINGS,** held a baby dedication on March 25. Shown are Justin and Karver Tillery, Sarah and Ayra Palmer, pastor Mike Brazeal, Leslie and Jayleigh Leach, Megan, Myles, Andrew, and Noah Taylor.



**FIRST CHURCH, MADISON,** Legacy Builders recently hosted an art program presented by Kerry Jackson (right). At the conclusion of the program where he painted an artistic rendition of the suffering of Christ, he presented the painting to Patsy Tolleson, Legacy Builders president. Jackson and his wife Twyla serve as evangelism catalyst missionaries through Mission Service Corps of Southern Baptists' North American Mission Board in suburban Atlanta.



**HATTIESBURG CHINESE CHRISTIAN CHURCH** held their official groundbreaking ceremony March 26 on Oak Grove Road in Hattiesburg. The church has been meeting for the past five years in the chapel of Hardy Street Church in Hattiesburg. Completion of the new church building is expected next summer.